UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[illegible]
Serial: 01759
NOV 10 1959

From: District Intelligence Officer, SIXTH Naval District
To: Director of Naval Intelligence

Subj: JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY - The
Belmont 78, Massachusetts

Encl: (1) The Blue Book of the John Birch Society
(2) The Life of John Birch
(3) American Opinion, January 1959 issue
(4) American Opinion, June 1959 issue
(5) Tract entitled: "Why People Become Communists"
(6) Tract entitled: "A Letter to KHRUSHCHEV"
(7) Application for Membership
(8) John Birch Society Monthly Bulletin, Sep 30, 1959

1. The JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY was founded by one Robert H. WELCH, Jr., of Belmont, Massachusetts in Indianapolis, Indiana on 9 December 1958, for the avowed purpose of combatting Communism. Two membership drive meetings were held at Knoxville, Tennessee during October 1959, and enclosures (1) through (8) inclusive, with the following quoted excerpts from a report by a confidential reliable source who attended the second meeting, 21 October 1959, are forwarded to assist in providing a characterization of the Subject society.

2. "The second meeting was held in the office of [redacted] Suite 108, Blount Professional Building, Knoxville, Tennessee. The persons attending the meeting were the Society's Regional Coordinator, [redacted] [redacted] [redacted], [redacted] and the writer.

3. "The meeting began with [redacted] explanation of the contents of a taped recorded speech played during the first meeting. The tapes had been made by Mr. Robert H. WELCH, Jr., of Belmont, Massachusetts. Mr. WELCH, past president of the Welch Candy Company of Belmont, Massachusetts, has, for the past nine years devoted his time "in fighting Communism". The tapes played at the first meeting summarized the growth of Communism in Europe, Asia and the United States.

Reviewed by [redacted] b6
b7C
SIRS/NCIS Code 22
Reviewed on 04apr13
NCIS info is unclassified

UNCLASSIFIED

ND6/ONI/GR/mgt
Serial:

Subj: JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY - The, Belmont 78, Massachusetts

NOV 10 1959

Another project for the local group is to raise funds or obtain an advertising backer so that [redacted], news analyst, will once again be carried by the local radio stations.

7. Source's Comments. "The organization's objectives as presented do not appear to be questionable but the structure of the organization and its leadership appear to warrant closer scrutiny. Mr. WELCH, in his talk, revealed a dictatorial mien along with certain possible Fasist leanings. Mr. WELCH, during his speech, indicated that he would not be opposed to, in fact would favor, strong militant methods to obtain his objective. This, combined with the organization's method of operations, i.e. no questioning of orders received, could lend itself to a Fasist type organization. Mr. WELCH also stated that he had access to the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation through a life-time friend who was acting as an advisor to the Bureau.

NCIS
b6
b7C

8. [redacted] stated that he had been dismissed from the University of Tennessee due to campus politics. Information obtained indicates that he may have been dismissed because of Fasist tendencies. [redacted] stated that he was married to a Spanish girl and had lived many years in Spain. He is an accomplished linguist, speaking Spanish and French fluently. From the use of various terms and words, the writer believes that [redacted] may possibly have served with the United States Navy sometime in the past.

9. [redacted] stated the reason for his joining the organization was that he had fought Communism all his life. The example he used to describe Communism was that of a man formerly employed by a bank, owned by [redacted] and his father, who absconded with a large sum of money. As a result of this, [redacted] and his father were forced out of the banking business. [redacted] after seeking and finding employment at the Tennessee National Bank, Knoxville, Tennessee, was dismissed due to this absconder's influence at the bank. Not at any time during [redacted] story did he indicate that this man had been a Communist. Both [redacted] and [redacted] appear to be maladjusted and have a deep resentment against Society for the unfortunate happenings in their life.

10. "Other members of the organization are not known to the writer. [redacted] who arrived late made few, if any statements which would reveal his reason for joining the organization. However, he appeared very intense in his "search" for Communist literature having just discovered a new magazine from which he read a few excerpts.

11. [redacted] of Rockingham Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee, a neighbor and recent recruit to this organization explains the Society as follows: It is a monolithic society with one leader who tells the members what to do. No discussion is allowed and all members are assigned one job a month. This month, the duties include writing letters to various Congressmen. She envisions the primary objective of the Society as that of defeating and eliminating the

N56/00108/mgt
Serial: 01759

Subj: JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY - The, Belmont 78, Massachusetts NOV 10 1959

4. " Last night's tapes covered the proposed organization of the Society and an explanation of the title, The John Birch Society. [redacted] BIRCH was a missionary in China and had assisted Chiang Kai-shek in his fight against the Japanese. During Chiang Kai-shek's campaign in Northern China, [redacted] along with several other persons in Southern China attempted to stem the rise of Communism in China. Following the end of World War II [redacted] a key target for Communist assassins and subsequently was killed. Mr. WELCH has chosen the name John BIRCH for the title of the Society in the attempt to use the man's life as an example for all "patriotic members" in the organization.

5. "The Society is to be organized in the following manner: a few dedicated, non-paid leaders will be in the top echelons, a few district and local coordinators in the middle echlon, who will be financially reimbursed, and a hard core of devoted supporters who would receive no compensation but give their time freely and willingly to the Society's cause. Mr. WELCH, in his talk, stated that he was the only one in the country capable of leading such an organization. The purpose of the organization is "less government and more responsibility." The present targets for the organization are the defeat of "the Communist-run United Nations", stoppage of aid to foreign countries and the fighting of Communist organizations. An additional immediate objective is that of opposing unions, especially that headed by [redacted]. It is intended that this organization should number one million people and that each of the members receive his instructions without question and follow any orders given. Emphasis is laid upon the fact that the Society is not anti-religious. In fact, it advocates strong religious ties.

NCIS
b6
b7C

6. "The local Knoxville Chapter, headed by [redacted] presently is comprised of nineteen members [redacted] signed and was accepted last evening making the nineteenth member. In order to establish a Chapter a total of twenty members are required. The closest existing Chapter is that in Sevierville, Tennessee, Chapter Number 33, whose leader is [redacted] The District Coordinator is [redacted] There is an active group in Gatlinburg, Tennessee who, as of yet, do not have sufficient persons to be recognized as a full Chapter. This is handled under the form of "Home Chapter". Dues for membership are $24.00 per year for men and $12.00 for women. The present task of the local group is writing letters to various Senators, i.e. [redacted] supporting his stand on the visit of [redacted] Khrushchev and requesting that President Eisenhower not make his proposed trip to Russia in the near future. In addition, they presently are studying what books are available and on display in the Public Library with the future intent to eliminate books considered pro-Communistic and replace them with books of their own choosing. All books will be chosen by Mr. WELCH. They hope to establish in Knoxville a reading room containing approximately 100 books, (similar to Christian Science Reading Rooms) which will be made available not only to members of the Society but to the public. These rooms will be staffed by trained volunteers who will instruct all visitors in how to "fight Communism."

[redacted]TIAL,

N06/OO10[illegible]
Serial: 01759
NOV 10 1959

Subj: JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY - The, Belmont 78, Massachusetts

Communist inspired United Nations, preventing any and all future foreign aid and fighting Communism. Statements made by this person reveal that she is completely unsure that there may be more than one side of thought to any issue. The doctrine presented to her by the Society appears to be accepted without question and probably will be rigidly adhered to.

12. "The official magazine of the Society is called American Opinion; its Editor is Robert WELCH. In addition, the group publishes a "Blue Book" which is a verbatim written record of the tapes to which the writer listened and there is a monthly bulletin published by the Society setting forth the agenda for its Chapters. The aforementioned publications with other literature of the Society is included in enclosures (1) through (8) inclusive."

13. The files of the District Intelligence Office, SIXTH Naval District contain no additional information concerning the Subject Society; also as to John BIRCH, John Harrison BIRCH, [redacted], [redacted]obert H. WELCH, Jr., [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted], who are mentioned in the above paragraphs.

14. Copy addressees of this letter are not furnished enclosures (1) through (8) because of their bulk and reproduction difficulties; neither have copies been retained for DIO-6ND files.

Nels
b6 b7C

15. Forwarded for information.

H. W. SADLER

Copy to: (less encls)
DIO-1ND
DIO-9ND
FBI-Knoxville
OSI, Distr # 6
Third Army, G-2

[redacted]